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CONTACT:
Sue Walitsky 202-224-4524 or
202-320-0819

CARDIN CRITICIZES EPA RUSH DECISION TO ALLOW E15 FUEL BLENDS

Washington, DC -- U.S. Senator Benjamin L. Cardin (D-MD), a member of the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee, issued the following statement today regarding the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's (EPA) decision to allow the commercial sale of E15 fuel blends – transportation fuels comprised of 15 percent ethanol and 85 percent gasoline - for automobiles made in model year 2007 or more recently.

“EPA’s decision to rush mid-level ethanol fuels to market before all of the necessary testing is complete puts motorists, boaters and engine-powered equipment users at risk.

“There are many unanswered questions about how EPA and filling stations will guarantee the safety of consumers and their equipment when these new fuels that have only been proven to work in newer cars coming to market. EPA has made prior determinations that that mid-level ethanol fuel blends have adverse affects on older vehicles and EPA certified non-road engines. Fuel retailers and consumers will bear the burden of having to deal with the potential problems that arise from misfueling.

“The thousands of waterman who make their livelihood on the Chesapeake Bay depend on reliable fuels to power their boats and rushing mid-level ethanol blends into any part of the market increases the risks of misfueling which can be both economically costly as well as present serious safety risks. I will continue to press EPA for answers to make sure EPA address public concern about rushing these fuels to market because the safety of Maryland motorists and boaters is a paramount concern.”

Senator Cardin, along with Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), are lead sponsors of S. 1666, the **Mid-Level Ethanol Blends Act**, which would require EPA to fully evaluate performance data on E15 use in current engines before it is made available on the wholesale and retail fuel markets.

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